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SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA
HQ USAF FOR XXXX
DA WASHDC FOR SASA
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA
USCINCENT MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO FOR ICD
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL
PARIS ALSO FOR POL
ROME FOR MFO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [IS KMDR MEDIA REACTION REPORT](#)

SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

- [1. Mideast](#)
- [2. Syrian Track](#)
- [3. Iraq](#)

Key stories in the media:

All media reported that PM Sharon and PA Chairman [President] Mahmoud Abbas are slated to meet on Tuesday, October 11. The meeting was organized under the auspices of Jordan's King Abdullah II. Leading media reported that top Sharon aide Dov Weisglass and chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat will meet on Friday or Sunday to prepare for the encounter. Yediot reported that upon this occasion, Israel is bound to introduce measures to ease the lives of the Palestinians -- roadblocks between Palestinian cities would be lifted; prisoners "with blood on their hands" would be released; Palestinians who were deported to Europe would be allowed to return to the territories. The newspaper quoted Sharon associates as saying that the gestures will strengthen Abbas. However, Israel Radio notes that a prisoner release would depend on a decision by a governmental panel. Speaking on Israel Radio this morning, Vice PM and Acting Finance Minister Ehud Olmert said that Abbas could not expect Israel to release prisoners who killed Jews.

Ha'aretz reported that Egypt is considering tendering a proposal to postpone the Palestinian elections scheduled for January 2006. The newspaper, which noted that Egypt is concerned about Abbas's weakened status, cited the belief of Israeli sources that Egypt's proposal could succeed. All media reported that on Monday, the Palestinian Legislative Council decided to dissolve the current government under Ahmed Qurei and to form a new cabinet within two weeks. (Major media reported that Qurei was hospitalized in Jordan after undergoing a cardiac incident.) Leading media cited anarchy prevailing in the Palestinian territories as the motive for the move. Leading media reported that on Tuesday, the PA kidnapped two Hamas activists. Citing AP, Jerusalem Post reported that Hamas political leader Khaled Mashaal accused the U.S. and Israel of responsibility for Sunday's clashes between Hamas activists and Palestinian security forces in the Gaza Strip. Maariv bannered an interview that Hamas leader Mahmoud Zahar granted to the Arabic-language web site Ilaf, in which he propounds what Maariv says is Hamas's plan to "turn Gaza into Tehran" -- an Islamic theocracy that would ban all contacts with Israel.

Leading media reported that on Wednesday in Alexandria, Va., top Pentagon analyst Lawrence (Larry) Franklin pleaded guilty to giving classified information to Israeli Embassy official Naor Gilon and members of AIPAC. U.S. District Judge T. S. Ellis III set sentencing for January 20. Leading media note that

Gilon and Israel were explicitly named for the first time.

Israel Radio and leading Israeli news web sites reported that today, the High Court of Justice ruled it was illegal for the Israel Defense Forces to use Palestinian civilians as "human shields." Chief Justice Aharon Barak, ruling in response to petitions from the Association for Civil Rights in Israel and the Adallah human rights organization, said the practice violates international law.

Ha'aretz reported that the rally in Tel Aviv's Rabin Square to mark the 10th anniversary of the assassination of PM Yitzhak Rabin is expected to be moved from November 5 to November 12, in order to enable former U.S. president Bill Clinton to attend. Clinton allegedly asked for the date change after finding himself in the middle of infighting between the rally's organizers.

All media reported that there were two knife attacks by Palestinians against IDF soldiers near Nablus over the Jewish New Year. A female attacker was killed and a soldier and bystander were lightly wounded in the incidents.

Jerusalem Post printed an AP item that quoted Palestinian FM Nasser al-Kidwa as saying in Cairo Wednesday that the PA will respect the decision of Arab countries if they choose to have relations with Israel, even if those decisions are not in the Palestinians' interests.

Maariv reported that during his visit to Damascus, Iranian Parliament Speaker Gholam Ali Haddad warned Israel against attacking his country's nuclear installations. Maariv reported that Syrian President Bashar Assad expressed his support for the development of Iran's nuclear program. The newspaper quoted Assad as saying that no one can separate Iran and Syria.

Ha'aretz cited a recent study by the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, according to which the separation wall, which cuts off tens of thousands of Palestinians, is not only having a negative effect on the lives of East Jerusalem's residents, but is also harming that city's Jewish inhabitants and its position as the nation's capital.

Jerusalem Post reported that on Monday, the English-language Indonesian newspaper Jakarta Post published an op-ed piece by FM Silvan Shalom, in which he wrote: "Israel does not see Islam as an enemy and has never seen it as such. On the contrary, history has shown us that Jews and Muslims lived in peace, harmony and friendship for many years in the past. This should be the aim in the future." Jerusalem Post notes this is the first time an Israeli minister has had an op-ed article printed in an Indonesian newspaper.

Citing AP, Ha'aretz and Jerusalem Post reported that on Wednesday, the European Commission proposed doubling its annual aid to the Palestinians -- now totaling some 250 million euros a year -- to help them build a credible government and develop trade with Israel and other neighbors.

During the past few days, all media reported on the aftermath of last Thursday's maritime collision near Japan's Hokkaido Island, in which seven Japanese fishermen lost their lives, apparently after being hit by an Israeli cargo ship. Yediot quoted a senior Foreign Ministry official as saying on Wednesday that Israel has managed to minimize the damage caused to diplomatic relations with Japan in the wake of the affair.

Jerusalem Post reported that last week, the Haifa District Court ruled against music-sharing web sites. The newspaper writes that the related lawsuit follows the U.S. Supreme Court's decision at the end of June regarding the on-line file-sharing services Grokster and Streamcast.

Ha'aretz, Yediot, and Jerusalem Post reported on the nomination of Harriet Miers to the U.S. Supreme Court.

1. Mideast:

Summary:

Independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized: "The

'enormous progress' that Sharon promises for this year must also include isolated settlements and not only illegal outposts."

Veteran op-ed writer and assistant to the late prime minister Yitzhak Rabin Eytan Haber opined in the lead editorial of mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: "The key for the next [Jewish] year is in the hands of Khaled Mashaal of Hamas and Arik Sharon of the [Israeli] government. Let's wish them wise and correct decisions."

Conservative columnist Amos Gilboa wrote in popular, pluralist Maariv: "If one can certainly understand Abu Mazen and his friends, it is quite difficult to understand the Left and its leader Beilin."

Columnist and former head of IDF Intelligence Shlomo Gazit wrote in Maariv: "Has anyone considered that we are running the risk of turning Hamas into the leading movement among the Palestinians, and is it indeed in our interest to reach this goal?"

Block Quotes:

I. "Progress Means Withdrawal"

Independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized (October 6): "On one hand, [Prime Minister Ariel Sharon] emphasizes that the ball is now in the Palestinians' court and until the Palestinians stop the terror and disarm the militant organizations, Israel does not need to take any additional steps. On the other hand, Sharon promises, according to a Jewish New Year interview with Yediot Aharonot, that 'in the next year there will be enormous progress in the peace process and in the implementation of the road map.' 'Enormous progress' can only be a reference to an enormous withdrawal.... The evacuation of the illegal outposts is a done deal between Israel and the United States, and only the timing is still undecided. Thus the 'enormous progress' that Sharon promises for this year must also include isolated settlements and not only illegal outposts.... The end of the Qassam rocket attacks on Sderot created an opportunity to hold the planned meeting between Sharon and Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmoud Abbas in the next several days. This meeting, even if nothing significant is said there, will create a dynamic of joint action that has been lacking. It will also raise expectations.... One can only express happiness over the fact that Sharon is not stopping at expecting change from the Palestinians and is not speaking about small and measured steps but rather about giant steps. The occupation has been waiting too many years for a bulldozer to end it. Political support for such steps is a function of determined leadership."

II. "Caution, Fragile!"

Veteran op-ed writer and assistant to the late prime minister Yitzhak Rabin Eytan Haber opined in the lead editorial of mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (October 6): "[In the mid-nineties] Arafat told [the Israelis]: 'I have opened the gate of the world to you.' However loathsome he was, he was also right. The first agreements with the PLO turned the world around.... [Today], politicians and journalists would be well advised to speak modestly. They are the best placed to know how quickly the wheel turns.... Even if Sharon, Netanyahu, and others deserve praise for their achievements, they don't have the key.... What can't be denied is that today, like in the '90s, the world loves us and extends its hands to us, following the implementation of the disengagement plan. It turns out that the world wants this to continue. In the future, residents of West Bank settlements will have to pay for every clap of Tony Blair's hands. Sharon himself not only wants to enter history books, but he wants them printed now. Thus, the key for the next [Jewish] year is in the hands of Khaled Mashaal of Hamas and Arik Sharon of the [Israeli] government. Let's wish them wise and correct decisions."

III. "Return of the Illusions"

Conservative columnist Amos Gilboa wrote in popular, pluralist Maariv (October 6): "The Israeli left wing, primarily the Geneva initiative band, has recently been calling with great vigor to launch a political initiative with the Palestinians, based on holding negotiations over a final status arrangement with the Palestinian partner. It has its reasons: there is a

partner, in the person of Abu Mazen; the various stages of the road map, which is being used by Sharon to freeze the situation, should be skipped.... If one can certainly understand Abu Mazen and his friends, it is quite difficult to understand the Left and its leader Beilin. They are like someone who advises people to come and live in a house that is going up in flames, in order to give hope to its unfortunate tenants.... Abu Mazen's strategy is clear, and its practical purpose is to do away with the road map.... From Israel's standpoint, the road map is not without problems, but at present this is the best route that Israel should stick to publicly, and in its declarations. First of all, it is currently the recognized international main route to political progress towards an arrangement with the Palestinians. Secondly, in sharp contrast to the Oslo Accords, it makes any progress contingent on eliminating terrorism and imposes the responsibility for this on the Palestinian Authority. Thirdly, it faces the Palestinians with a clear political horizon, which ends in a state. Their hope is in the road map, if they are only able to take responsibility, to take care of themselves and stop playing the underdog. The heart of the problem is that the chances for this are very low, in the near future.... In future, the disengagement from Gaza will become a model for the Israeli strategy versus the Palestinians and the international community."

IV. "How to Strengthen Hamas"

Columnist and former head of IDF Intelligence Shlomo Gazit wrote in Maariv (October 6): "In a lecture at the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, [O/C Operations Directorate] Maj. Gen. Yisrael Ziv addressed the conclusions drawn by the IDF in the five years of the Intifada and reported the emergence of the 'operational concept.' He did not expand on this concept, save to clarify that within this new concept the decision was also made to liquidate all members of the Hamas leadership.... My ... main reservation refers to the substance of the decision. In the short term -- has anyone deluded himself that it will be possible to paralyze Hamas by liquidating the leadership of the organization? Will a new and younger leadership not arise immediately, a leadership that will be more cautious, but also more militant and vengeful? And in the longer term -- how will the assassinations affect the status of Hamas in Palestinian society, and the political balance of power between Hamas and the PA and Fatah? Has anyone considered that we are running the risk of turning Hamas into the leading movement among the Palestinians, and is it indeed in our interest to reach this goal?"

12. Syrian Track:

Summary:

Diplomatic correspondent Aluf Benn wrote in independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz: "There appears to be no reason to feel pressured over the issue [of the Golan] and ... it is possible to put off a solution for a few years. Nevertheless, while Assad's chair is shaky, it is worthwhile thinking about a creative response on the Syrian track."

Block Quotes:

"The Return of the Golan"

Diplomatic correspondent Aluf Benn wrote in independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (October 6): "If the Americans succeed and Assad is replaced by some sort of Syrian Abu Mazen who will speak in moderate tones and represent the country's Sunni majority, the Golan will soon be back on the agenda. Assad's successors would demand of the Americans that they strengthen their regime by means of an Israeli territorial concession. This is apparently the reason why Israel prefers an Assad who is weak, isolated and under pressure to a change of government that would upset the 'northern system.' An Assad in power means that the Golan remains in Israeli hands.... There are disadvantages to a unilateral withdrawal from the Golan Heights. It would mean forgoing the agreement that has ensured quiet on the Syrian border for 31 years. It would mean abandoning the demand for new security arrangements. Above all, there is no oppressive occupation of a hostile population on the Golan, there is no terror,

and there is no demographic problem or international pressure as there is regarding the West Bank. This is why there appears to be no reason to feel pressured over the issue and that it is possible to put off a solution for a few years. Nevertheless, while Assad's chair is shaky, it is worthwhile thinking about a creative response on the Syrian track."

13. Iraq:

Summary:

Liberal columnist Larry Derfner wrote in conservative, independent Jerusalem Post: "The U.S., with divine intentions and amazing recklessness, broke Iraq. It cannot walk away from this mess."

Block Quotes:

"Fight, Not Flight"

Liberal columnist Larry Derfner wrote in conservative, independent Jerusalem Post (October 6): "What the U.S. does in Iraq will affect the fate of the whole world. So whether the U.S. should have gone to war isn't relevant anymore. All that matters is what should be done now, with an eye to the future. Unfortunately, there is only one clear, understandable proposal -- unilateral withdrawal. It holds that since everybody sees by now that the war is a disaster, that the killing keeps getting worse, America should cut its losses and save the lives of American soldiers by packing up and getting out of Iraq ASAP. Agree with this or not, it's at least a cogent argument.... Well, I'm very sorry, but it's time for Americans to grow up, to stop being the spoiled, shallow adolescents they've become. There is this thing in life called responsibility. When you make a mess, you have to clean it up. Or, as Colin Powell, the only grown-up ever to be employed by the Bush administration, put it in the case of Iraq, Pottery Barn rules apply: you break it, you own it. The U.S., with divine intentions and amazing recklessness, broke Iraq. It cannot walk away from this mess. If it does, there would be a bloodbath.... What's more, the worst killers on earth would win a colossal, historic victory. America's self-confidence would be crippled. Al-Qaida and its like would be supercharged on every continent where Muslims live. The defeat of the U.S. by the insurgents in Iraq would have an electrifying effect across much of the world, and an intimidating effect across the rest of it.... I say bring back the draft and raise taxes. To anyone who opposes bringing the troops home now -- what do you say?"

JONES